

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4769
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C O N F I D E N T I A L NATO 06656

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, UK
SUBJECT: UK DEFENSE CUTS: US POSITION

REF: (A) USNATO 6272 (DTG 301950Z JUN 77), (B) USNATO 5809
(DTG 221302Z JUN 77), (C) USNATO 5110 (DTG 102059Z JUN 77)
(NOTAL), (D) 76 USNATO 6902 (DTG 171634Z DEC 76)(NOTAL)

1. AS NOTED REF A, SYG LUNS INTENDS TO HANDLE THE MATTER
OF UK DEFENSE EXPENDITURE REDUCTIONS FOR FY 78/79 IN TWO
STAGES. HE HAS ASKED THE NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES
(NMAS) FOR AN ESTIMATE OF THE MILITARY EFFECTS OF THE UK
PROPOSALS (REF B) AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, AND PLANS A DPC
MEETING IN LATE JULY TO CONSIDER THE ASSESSMENT AND DECIDE
WHAT FURTHER CONSULTATIONS MAY BE REQUIRED TO ALLOW THE
DPC TO RETURN TO THE MATTER IN EARLY SEPTEMBER.

2. WE FIND THIS APPROACH SENSIBLE, SINCE IT WILL PERMIT
THE NMAS, THROUGH DIRECT LIAISON WITH MODUK, TO LEARN
ABOUT THE REDUCTIONS IN SUFFICIENT DETAIL TO BE ABLE TO
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SUGGEST ALTERNATIVES. SUCH AN APPROACH ALSO PRESERVES THE
CREDIBILITY OF THE CONSULTATIONS PROCESS, SINCE THE NMAS,
IF THEY DETERMINE THAT THE PROPOSED CUTS ENTIAL UNDUE RISK,
MAY SUGGEST A REVERSAL, AT LEAST IN PART, OF THE UK'S
DECISION TO REDUCE DEFENSE SPENDING.

3. OUR THOUGHTS ON THE POLITICAL FACTORS WHICH SHOULD

INFLUENCE THE US POSITION ON THESE REDUCTIONS ARE CONTAINED IN REFS C AND D. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE US, AS THE ONLY ALLY WHICH SPENDS MORE BY ANY MEASURE FOR NATO DEFENSE THAN THE OTHERS, INCLUDING THE UK, SHOULD TAKE A STRICT AND UNCOMPROMISING POSITION THAT REDUCED DEFENSE SPENDING, GIVEN ADVERSE TRENDS IN THE NATO/WARSAW PACT BALANCE, SHOULD BE AVOIDED. WE THINK THE BRITISH, AS WELL AS THE SMALLER ALLIES, EXPECT THIS FROM US, AND WE WOULD NOT WANT TO DISAPPOINT THEM. ACCORDINGLY, AT THE AS-YET-UNSCHEDULED LATE-JULY DPC, WE PROPOSE TO:

- . (A) WELCOME THE UK OFFER OF DETAILED CONSULTATIONS,
- . (B) EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE NMAS, THROUGH COORDINATION WITH UK NATIONAL AUTHORITIES, CAN SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO REDUCE WHICH MAY NOT BE HARMFUL TO NATO DEFENSE,
- . (C) NOTE IN CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLE TERMS OUR DISSATISFACTION WITH REDUCED DEFENSE SPENDING AT A TIME OF INCREASED THREAT.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON GUIDANCE BY OOB JULY 26.
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